

my guess. And all I can tell you is, as soon as I found out about it late last week, I said, "Get this out and let's go on." And you can view the tapes and draw your own conclusions.

Q. The question isn't really whether the WHCA people tried to withhold them, but whether people like your counsel and other officials involved who realized these videotapes existed didn't turn them over.

The President. Oh, I'm sure that Mr. Ruff didn't do that. I talked to him—he called me as soon as he knew about it—or one of the assistant counsels came down—

Q. When was that?

The President. I think it was Thursday afternoon. Came down and told me, and that's the first I knew about it. And I don't think they had known about it for very long. And I'm sure they took a little time to figure out exactly what was covered, how much they needed to do, and reviewed the materials, and then turned them over, which is what should have been done.

Stand-Clark-Squillacote Espionage Case

Q. Sir, are you concerned about the Soviet espionage arrests that happened in Virginia today, that date back to the cold war? And just how widespread is this problem, sir?

The President. Well, let me say I have been briefed about it, and it appears to me that the law enforcement authorities have done their job in trying to uncover a problem. We'll have to wait and see. We can't presume people's guilt. But I think that the only responsible thing is for me to refer you to the Justice Department because they made those judgments.

Assassination Attempt on Khaled Meshal

Q. Mr. President, one other matter. On this apparently failed assassination attempt by Israeli agents in Jordan, what was your reaction to that? And are these not precisely the kinds of actions that serve to undermine confidence in the peace process?

The President. Well, since the Government of Israel and the Government of Jordan have made no comment about this, I think it is inappropriate for me to make any comment. I will say this—you know the policy of the United States for our own conduct is,

and has been I believe for more than 20 years under Presidents of both parties, that we do not engage in assassinations. But I can make no comment on what others did or did not do when it has not been confirmed by either of the governments in question.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kurt Alan Stand, James Michael Clark, and Theresa Marie Squillacote, who were accused of spying for East Germany since 1972; and Khaled Meshal, Hamas leader who was attacked in Amman, Jordan, on September 25. The Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1998, H.R. 2016, approved September 30, was assigned Public Law No. 105-45.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Line Item Vetoes of the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1998

October 6, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Line Item Veto Act, I hereby cancel the dollar amounts of discretionary budget authority, as specified in the attached reports, contained in the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1998" (Public Law 105-45; H.R. 2016). I have determined that the cancellation of these amounts will reduce the Federal budget deficit, will not impair any essential Government functions, and will not harm the national interest.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 6, 1997.

NOTE: The report detailing the cancellation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 7.

Statement on Signing Legislation Designating the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington Field Office Memorial Building

October 6, 1997

Today I am pleased to have signed into law H.R. 2443, a bill that would designate